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Space, Time and Abstract Relations in the Coffin Texts

A version of this paper was presented at the International Conference “Language Typology and Egyptian-Coptic Linguistics” held in Leipzig (2–5 October 2008), organized by the Egyptological Institute of the University of Leipzig and the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.

I propose in this paper some ideas that evolved from the results I reached in my PhD dissertation on the motion verbs in the Coffin Texts (CT)¹. These results are based on an exhaustive and systematic analysis of this corpus made with an electronic database from which more than 5,000 cases of study were extracted.

§ 1. Space: from situation to motion

It is well known that spatial expressions, beside their specific meaning (situation or motion), may be used to express metaphorically temporal and abstract relations² and that such metaphorical uses may be neurologically based³.

1.1. In Egyptian, to express **situation** the adverbial sentence is used; its structure is: nominal subject⁴ (first participant, p_1) + adverbial predicate (second participant, p_2). Spatial possibilities of said expression are:

- abessive case: the p_1 is outside the p_2 and faces away from it;
- essive case: the p_1 is in the region⁵ of the p_2 ;
- inessive case: the p_1 is inside the p_2 ;
- adessive case: the p_1 is outside the p_2 and it faces it.

Here is an example of the inessive, abessive and adessive cases:

Ex. 1 CT IV 367 c–d

iw qb3.w.s m p.t dns.wt.s m b3 qb3.w r p.t m qb3.w z3 r' r b3 sn.w 3h.t

“Its (= net’s) floats (are) **in** the sky (and) its ballasts (are) **in** the earth, the fresh waters (are) **from** the sky, as *qb3.w*, Re’s son, **to** the earth of misery of the horizon”.

The abessive case is very rare. In fact this is the only case I could find in the Coffin Texts and yet the correct interpretation of this example is very difficult. Adessive and inessive cases present no problem.

Finally, here is an example of the essive case:

Ex. 2 CT II 129 b

iw 3.t.k hr ph.wy.k

“Your force (is) **on** your hindquarters”.

It may be graphically resumed in the scheme of Fig. 1.

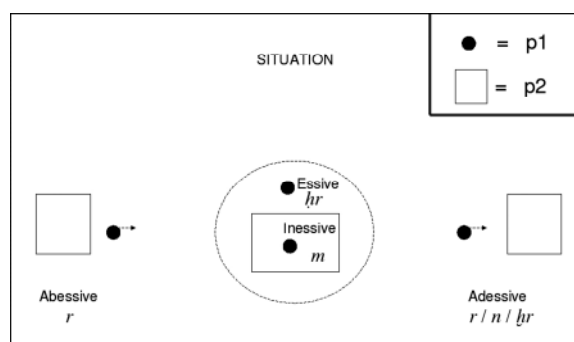


Fig. 1. Spatial expressions.

¹ Gracia Zamacona, C. (2008).

² In general, cf. Pottier, B. (1962); Hjelmslev, L. (1935 & 1937); Anderson, J. M. (1976); Lakoff, G./Johnson, M. (1980), 14, 30–32 & 41–45; Savary, R. (1984), 16; Langacker, R. W. (1987), 148–149; Rojas Nieto, C. (1988), 23 & n. 37; Lamiroy, B. (1988); Berthonneau, A. M. (1993); Bertinetto, P. M. (1997), 148 & n. 18; Haspelmath, M. (1997); Gattis, M. (2001); Naïm, S. (2006). In Egyptian, cf. James, T. G. H. (1962), 111; Winand, J. (2006), 158.

³ D’Aquila, E. G. (1983), 249, 251, 252 & 254.

⁴ Or equivalent.

⁵ For the concept, cf. Svorou, S. (1994) § 2.1.1.

1.2. When space is expressed within a temporal expression, not only does the syntactical pattern change (from an adverbial sentence to a verbal sentence), but also the semantic content of the expression that is no longer a situation, but a **motion** (in the broad sense: ‘space in time’).

The expression of motion is characterized by the presence of a spatial adjunct (SA) as p_2 of the motion verb. The SA’s semantic structure is as follows:

- if the motion verb expresses displacement (e.g., ‘to go’), the SA can indicate provenance, course or destination;
- but, if the motion verb expresses position (e.g., ‘to stand’), the only possible SA is a locative.

Each of these cases can be interior, exterior or general, which leads us to the two possibilities of Figs. 2 and 3.

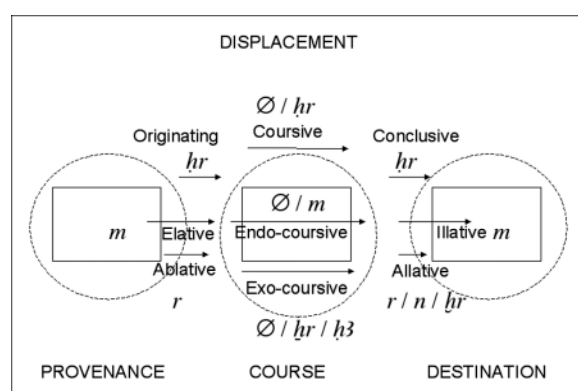


Fig. 2. Expression of displacement.

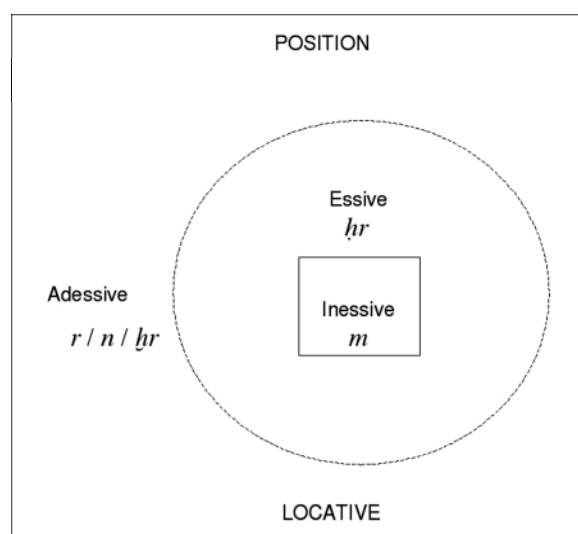


Fig. 3. Expression of position.

There are entities in Egyptian that, as they are introduced by prepositions, seem to be conceived as possessing internal space. These entities accept the opposition between the preposition *m*, that expresses the feature ‘interior’, and *r*, that expresses the feature ‘exterior’. Other entities lack internal space and do not accept that opposition: the neutralisation of this opposition is expressed by the preposition *hr*, which has the feature ‘general’ (i.e. not interior nor exterior). Egyptian simple prepositions express these basic features, but not the features ‘provenance’, ‘course’ or ‘destination’, that depend on the verb and the context.

In order to describe the basic spatial meanings of Egyptian prepositions other features are (prototypically)⁶ required. These are ‘animate/inanimate’, ‘divine/non-divine’ and ‘limit/non-limit’. This is the resulting table:

Table 1

Prepos.	Interior space	Limit	Animacy	Divinity
<i>hr</i>	–	–	–	–
<i>m</i>	+	–	–	–
<i>r</i>	+	+	–	–
<i>n</i>	+	+	+	–
<i>hr</i>	+	+	+	+

Just to illustrate the SAs of displacement verbs, here is an example of the cases with the feature ‘interior’ (illative, elative and endo-coursive):

Ex. 3 CT II 38 c

pr min m imn.tt m ibb.tt m h.t n.t nw.t

“Go up today **into** the West **from** the East, **through** Nut’s belly!”

And to illustrate the SAs of position verbs, here is an example of adessive and inessive cases:

Ex. 4 CT VII 231 b

hmm.f wr r psd.t hms m-hnt wrr.w m iwnw

“*hmm.f*, greater than the Ennead! Sit down **in front of** the Great Ones **in** Heliopolis!”

⁶ The concept is well exposed in Kleiber, G. (1990).

Let us see now the semantic extensions of the spatial prepositions: firstly, the temporal ones, then the abstract relations.

§ 2. From space to time

Temporal semantic extensions of spatial expressions (situation and motion) are expressed by pseudoverbal constructions with infinitive, and by circumstantial (temporal) clauses.

In figure 4 there is a scheme of these temporal extensions.

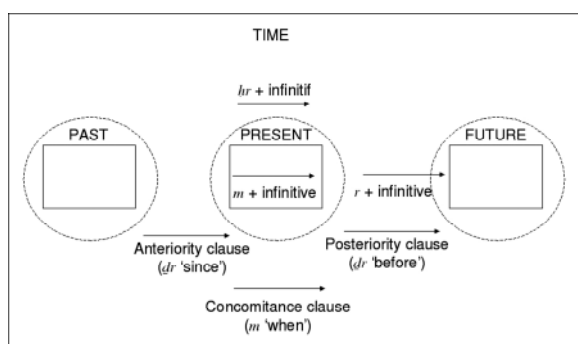


Fig. 4. Temporal semantic extensions.

2.1. Among the temporal semantic extensions, the **pseudoverbal constructions with infinitive** are fundamental. These constructions are formally adverbial sentences⁷. Notwithstanding this, the prepositions keep their basic meaning: *m* indicates an action as an entity with interior space, *hr* indicates an action as an entity without interior space, while *r* indicates an action at its “right” limit, graphically speaking: in fig. 4, past is at the left and future at the right.

All three of these constructions are imperfective, which comes, in general, from their original formal nature (adverbial sentence). But the specific temporal *effets de sens* come from the semantic values of the prepositions and the entities (in this case infinitives) introduced by them.

The opposition *m/hr* for the imperfective non-future and non-general⁸ would originally be

based on the opposition between essive and inessive cases of situations⁹ (cf. 1.1) and between interior space and absence of interior space of the SAs (cf. 1.2). A punctual state-of-affairs could be conceived as having no interior temporal space (i.e. duration)¹⁰, while a non-punctual state-of-affairs would appear to have interior space. So, it would be the semantic extension of a spatial concept into the temporal domain (more precisely, into the verbal Aktionsart). Consequently, non-punctual dynamic verbs would naturally accept the *m* + infinitive construction to express the progressive, while with achievements without a prephase, this construction would take an imminent sense (‘to be about to do something’)¹¹. As for the *hr* + infinitive construction, it would naturally be accepted by punctual states-of-affairs to express the progressive. Nevertheless, this construction seems to be grammaticalized for the progressive of all states-of-affairs since it appears in the texts known at the present time¹².

I present here some arguments regarding these constructions in the Coffin Texts, depending on the Aktionsart of the verbs concerned.

Firstly, the verbs with reduplicated root (e.g., 1212) are activities with an iterative *effet de sens* (<...>) because the lexical base of these verbs is punctual, either an achievement (<+>) or a semelfactive (<.>)¹³. So, the progressive of verbs with a reduplicated root is expressed by the *m* + infinitive construction and not by the *hr* + infinitive construction, as shown in table 2:

Ex. 5 CT VI 86 g

iw.i m ḥḥ ḥf.ty.w.i

‘I am looking for my enemies’.

⁹ For the morphological relationship between progressive and essive and inessive cases, cf. Traugott, E. C. (1978) § 2.3.1; Traugott, E. C./König, E. (1991), 207; Bertinetto, P. M. (1997), 80 (inessive).

¹⁰ Klein, W. (1994), 186–187 & 195.

¹¹ Winand, J. (2006), 310.

¹² Vernus, P. (1990), 158–162; Collier, M. (1994), 60–67; Vernus, P. (1996), 66–75; Winand, J. (2006), 306.

¹³ For these symbols, cf. Malaise, M./Winand, J. (1999) §§ 359–360.

⁷ I am speaking about form, not about functions here. Cf. Junge, F. (1970).

⁸ Vernus, P. (1990), chap. 8.

Table 2

Verb	<i>m</i> + infinitive		<i>hr</i> + infinitive
	Imminent	Progressive	Progressive
‘shake’	—	1 ¹⁴	—
<i>hh</i> (<i><hwiḥwi</i>) ‘look for’	—	5 ¹⁵	—

Secondly, as it was said above, with achievements lacking a prephase (<+>_____ and <+>.....), the *m* + infinitive construction adopts an imminent *effet de sens*, while the progressive is expressed by the *hr* + infinitive construction, as we can see in table 3.

Table 3

Verb	<i>m</i> + infinitive		<i>hr</i> + infinitive
	Imminent	Progressive	Progressive
<i>bti</i> ‘forsake’ ¹⁶	1 ¹⁷	—	—
<i>pri</i> ‘go out, go up’	1 ¹⁸	—	—
<i>rdi</i> ‘put’	1 ¹⁹	—	—
<i>h3i</i> ‘go down’	—	—	1 ²⁰
<i>hbs</i> ‘cover’	1 ²¹	—	—

Ex. 6 CT VII 52 a–c

*i ʿb d3 im.(v) k3r.f ir.ty.k h3.k z3 tw [n-ntt]²² wsir N pn m
pr.t m htp.w.f ipn r.k db.(w)*

“Oh horn who have ferried, who are in your chapel! Look backwards (lit. your eyes behind you)! Beware [because] this Osiris N **is about to go out** with these offerings of his (and) your mouth is blocked!”

¹⁴ CT V 40 c.

¹⁵ CT II 111 i, IV 174 f, IV 182 n, V 284 b & VI 86 g.

¹⁶ Wb I, 485 (*bt*). For classifying this verb as a III^a inf., cf. CT V 332 g (*bt.y.f* prospective).

¹⁷ CT VI 293 d.

¹⁸ CT VII 52 b.

¹⁹ CT VI 193 c.

²⁰ CT IV 345 a.

²¹ CT VI 193 c.

²² This restoration is hypothetical.

Ex. 7 CT IV 344 c–345 b

*wn n.i sb3.w imḥ.t r w3.wt nfr.(w) t m hrw tp-m iw nsrsr n
m3ʿ.tyw r bw n.ty 3h.tyw im pr.i im hr sb3 dsr i33 nfr hr
smi.t.i n.tn m wi3 n hpr-ds.f ir.yw hm.w hr h3.(t)²³ r t3
s3m.w hr mdw.t n m3ʿ.t*

“Open for me the doors of the Afterworld to the beautiful ways by day, towards the Island of the Flame of the Righteous Ones, to the place where the Spiritualized Ones (are), that I may go up there through the sacred door, the beautiful *i33* informing you about me in the Self-created’s *wi3*-bark, the guardians of the steering-oars **going down** to earth (and) the guides talking to Maat!”

Another fact showing this semantic extension could be the expression ‘to retract’ (*hmi*) + *m*/**hr* + abstract name/infinitive, where non-punctual states-of-affairs would be indicated by *m* (relative). Unfortunately, there is no occurrence for *hr* (originating case).

Ex. 8 CT V 322 k–m

*ht.t(i) hm.t(i) n tz.wy ipwy dd.n 3s.t r.k m iw.t.k r wd.t sh3
m r n wsir n ib n sth hf.t(y).f m dd.s r.k*

“Now you have gone back, **now** **you have retracted**, because of these two sentences Isis has spoken against you, **from** coming to put memory into Osiris’ mouth due to Seth’s desire, his enemy, according to what she (= Isis) says to you”.

As for the imperfective future *r* + infinitive construction²⁵, the preposition *r* indicates a limit “by the right”, i.e. the adessive and allative cases²⁶ (cf. 1.1), existing also at other levels²⁷, and the verbal form (infinitive) puts the state-of-

²³ Faulkner, R. O. (1994–1996), I, 275 & n. 7 (CT [341]) considers it an old perfective with *hr* ‘face’ as its subject. Carrier, C. (2004), I, 850–851 translates it as if it were *hr* + infinitive, but transliterating *h3*.

²⁴ These old perfectives are usually translated as imperatives. In fact, the compelling *effet de sens* is a consequence of the old perfective selection of the static post-phase of these state-of-affairs, possibly accomplishments, what I have tried to translate using ‘now’ before the present perfect. Perhaps one could paraphrase it with ‘You find yourself in the state of having retracted from’.

²⁵ Vernus, P. (1990), chap. 1. This construction opposes the prospective, which is a perfective future: cf. Loprieno, A. (1986).

²⁶ For the relationship between the allative case and the future, a well known phenomenon in general linguistics, cf. Traugott, E. C. (1978), 376.

²⁷ The SAs (cf. 1.2), final clauses (cf. 3.2.3), opposition (cf. 3.2.4), comparison (cf. 3.3.5) and the *r* of future (cf. 3.3.2).

affairs in the time. This is an example from the Coffin Texts:

Ex. 9 CT IV 89 g

iw.i r wb3 n.k w3.wt imh.t

“I **am going to pierce** for you the ways of the Beyond”.

The semantic continuity between the adessive case and this future construction, both formally adverbial sentences, is explicit in the following example. In this example, the deceased answers with the structure in question to the goddess *h3ni.t* who uses an adverbial sentence. The context is the ferryboat demand:

Ex. 10 CT VI 338 q-r

- *i(w).k r.k r zb.w (= zy)*²⁸

“You are then (bound) **to** what? (≅ What are you going to do ?)”

- *iw.i r dw3 r**

“I **am to** adore Re (≅ I am going to adore Re)”

This semantic extension implies a linear vision of time developing from past to future. In other words, the vision of time according to the orientation of the entities (the subject, *par excellence*) in time²⁹. In fact, this vision of time comes from a more general notion, facing³⁰, which justifies the future value of this construction: as the temporal fluid flows from past to future, the subject shows the face to the future, which is linguistically expressed by the construction under study. Concerning this, one should note the expression *šm* + subject + *m-s3 hr* + possessive suffix (= subject) ‘go after his/her face’, i.e. ‘go ahead’³¹.

As a matter of fact, time may also be conceived in the contrary sense, from the point of view of time itself, flowing from future to past, but this does not seem relevant to our study³².

²⁸ Following Faulkner, R. O. (1994–1996), II, n. 11 (p. 267).

²⁹ Rojas Nieto, C. (1988), 110.

³⁰ Kimball, J. (1974); Fillmore, Ch. J. (1975), 49; Lyons, J. (1994), 691; Lakoff, G./Johnson, M. (1980), 14 & 41–45; Rojas Nieto, C. (1988), 76.

³¹ CT VII 477 e–f. Faulkner, R. O. (1994–1996), III, p. 171 & n. 6 (CT [1134]).

³² Lyons, J. (1994), 698; Rojas Nieto, C. (1988), 108–109; Bertinetto, P. M. (1997), 146 (n. 15). For this double concept of the future also in English, cf. Lakoff, G./Johnson, M. (1980), 41–43. Cf. also the

2.2. Other temporal extensions are the **temporal clauses**.

The preposition *dr*, indicating theoretically the limit “by the left” in the abessive case, has not produced the same temporal effect as the preceding construction.

In fact, the construction *dr* + verbal form is a clause of anterior time. Nevertheless, this preposition keeps the idea of limit “by the left”, hence the meaning ‘since’; placed at a superior syntactical level, *dr* is used as a conjunction. For instance,

Ex. 11 CT I 141 d–e

di n.t sy m-hn.w ʿwy.t dr wn.t.s i.t(i) 3h.t(i) ʿpr.t(i) m iw nsrsr

“Put her then inside your hands **as soon as** she will be come, spiritualized (and) equipped from the Island of the Flame!”

But this construction can also mean ‘before’, which implies, on the contrary, a limit “by the right”: so, it is also used for clauses of posterior time. For instance,

Ex. 12 CT I 242 f

my m rm.n wsir N pn dr hr.t.fir.n

“Come then! May we cry (for) this Osiris N **before** he is far from us!”

This could be explained by the use of specific verbal forms or by the etymology of this preposition, *dr(w)* ‘limit’³³ (so, indifferently usable for both points of reference), or by both facts together³⁴. It should be noted that the subordinate clause with *dr* has also a causal meaning: it is an extension derived from the semantic temporal extension that will be studied in 3.1.1. As an example,

Ex. 13 CT VII 353 a³⁵

š3.n.f dr hr.f im.f

“It is **because** it (= Osiris’ fluid) has fallen there (= Rostau) that it (= Rostau) has isolated (itself)”.

Hebrew root *qdm* ‘in front’, ‘east’, ‘ahead’, ‘advance’, ‘antiquity’, ‘origin’.

³³ Cf. the composed preposition *m-dr(w)*: Edel, E. (1954–1964) § 812; Junge, F. (1996), 242–243.

³⁴ Cf. Depuydt, L. (1998), section II.

³⁵ Main version.

The value ‘internal space’ for the preposition *m*, extended on the temporal plan, allows this preposition to introduce, as a conjunction, clauses of concomitant time.

§ 3. From space to abstract relations

Beside the temporal semantic extensions, prepositions expressing space have other semantic extensions expressing abstract relations such as opposition, comparison or identity. These abstract semantic extensions can be explained, like the temporal semantic extensions, by the meaning of the prepositions in the adverbial sentences.

The abstract semantic extensions are classified in three categories: **cause** (where the first participant is placed with regard to a limit “by the left”), **finality** (where the first participant is placed with regard to a limit “by the right”) and **characterization** (where the first participant is placed in a situation without limits or with regard to a limit “by the right”, having in this latter case a future or modal meaning), compare Fig. 5.

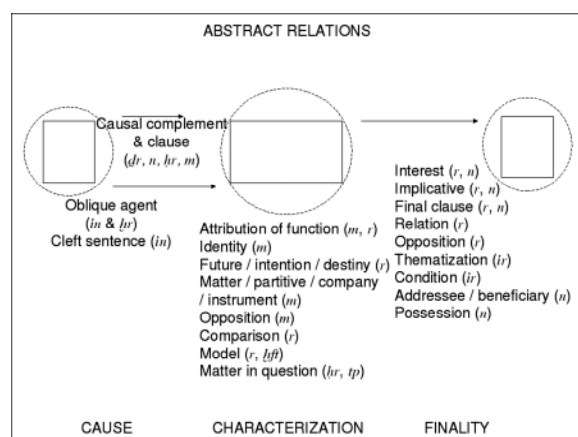


Fig. 5. Abstract semantic extensions.

3.1. Cause.

3.1.1. Causal adjuncts and clauses.

The notional semantic extension of cause we have mentioned in 2.2 for the preposition/conjunction *dr* is also documented for the prepositions *n*, *hr* and *m*, which introduce causal ad-

juncts and clauses. The use of the preposition *n* for this meaning presents no problem, since it has the feature ‘limit’. As for the prepositions *hr* and *m*, their use to express cause must come from their use to indicate the local function of provenance for the SAs (cf. 1.2). Here is an example:

Ex. 14 CT VI 220 u

nf.n.i mnd.t hr ir.ty.k hr

“It is **because of** your eyes, Horus, that I have pushed back the day-bark”.

3.1.2. Oblique expression of the agent.

Oblique expression of the agent (typically animate), usually indicated by *in*, but sometimes also by *hr*³⁶, shows the non-divine/divine opposition among animates, as we have already seen for their spatial functions (cf. 1.2).

In the Coffin Texts, this opposition seems to be about to disappear in favour of *in*: *in* seems to introduce any kind of oblique agent, but, in some cases, different documents hesitate (even within a single document) between these two prepositions, when the agent is divine.

Ex. 15 CT II 389 b

rdi.n.t(w) nn n l3w.w n N pn in³⁷/hr³⁸ nn n hwn.wt

“It is for this N that these winds have been given **by** these ladies”.

If *in*³⁹ were etymologically related to *n*⁴⁰ and if it also had the feature ‘limit’ (as do *hr*, *r* and *dr*), we would have here two morphemes able to express, at the same or at different syntactical levels, the limits by the “left” and by the “right”⁴¹. This seems to confirm the idea that an

³⁶ Edel, E. (1954–1964) § 768 (f).

³⁷ BH1Ox, G1T & A1C.

³⁸ B1Bo, S2C, B6C, B2Bo, B4Bo, Y1C, M22C, BH2C & T3C.

³⁹ For the syntax of *in*, see Loprieno, A. (1988); Loprieno, A. (1995), 64–65, 83–84 & 100 (mainly); Reintges, Ch. (1998).

⁴⁰ Possible writing *in* for *n* (beneficiary) in CT VI 254 e–f (B3Bo): *i h3b in nb w^c mr.t r^c* “Oh, send **for** the Unique Master what Re wishes!”

⁴¹ The latter seems to be the “marked term” of the pair: cf. for instance Delancey, S. (1982), 170 (& n. 12) & 179; Lazard, G. (1994), 226. Cf. also Vandeloise, C. (1988), n. 13 (p. 109).

action can be considered as a continuum flowing between two points whose marks can be, in a sense, symmetrical. We can formulate the hypothesis that such a symmetry was expressed by a different vocalisation, even if this is difficult to demonstrate. In Burmese, for instance, the morpheme *ko* indicates patient and destination, while the morpheme *ká* indicates provenance and agent⁴².

It is in the sense of the symmetry of marks that the causal clause introduced by *n*, already mentioned, as well as the **cleft sentence** introduced by *in* should be considered.

3.2. Finality.

3.2.1. Interest.

The preposition *r* indicating inanimate allative, and its equivalent *n* for the animate allative, shows also a notional extension for expressing interest. Two examples:

Ex. 16 CT I 299 m

rs r.t.k pn srfiri.(w).n.i n.k

“Wake up **for** this cooked bread that I have made for you!”

Ex. 17 CT I 205 f

sd3 n.k 3h.t mi r

“The horizon has quivered **for** you as (it does for) Re”.

3.2.2. Implicative.

These two prepositions (*r* and *n*) appear also to indicate the implicative, typically after the imperative and similar tenses. For example,

Ex. 18 CT V 74 v

ini n.i r.k wrs.s

“**So**, bring me its (= boat’s) mast support!”

3.2.3. Final clauses.

This is also the reason why the preposition *r* is used as a conjunction to introduce final clau-

ses. More rarely, the preposition *n* can express finality too, for example:

Ex. 19 CT VI 310 k–l

p3.n.f itt.n.f m bik pw 3 hr.(y) znb.w hw.t imm rn.f iti hr.t n.t(y)w im n dsr p.t r t3 nw.w

“It is just like that great falcon that (is) on the battlements of the mansion of the one whose name is hidden, the one who has taken what belongs to those who (are) there **to** separate the sky from the earth (and from) Nun, that he has flown off (and) fluttered”.

3.2.4. Relation, opposition, thematization and condition.

For a similar reason, the preposition *r* expresses the simple relation, opposition (cf. 3.3.4), thematization (*ir* form) and condition (*ir* form). This is an example of the relation use:

Ex. 20 CT V 150 a

h.t nb.t smh.t.n.i m mhn.t tn nis.t.n.i r.s

“Everything I have forgotten on this ferry (is) what I had invoked **with regard to** it”.

3.2.5. Addressee/beneficiary.

The same goes for the addressee/beneficiary (indirect object), that can be considered as an extension from the animate allative, both functions indicated by the preposition *n*. The indirect object, typically animate⁴³, human and determined frequently appears in the destination space. With transfer verbs (e.g. *ini*), which are trivalential actions, the adjunct introduced by *n* is typically the indirect object, but with other verbs, the analysis is more complex. For instance, with a displacement verb, it is difficult to decide between an allative and an addressee/beneficiary.

Ex. 21 CT VI 157 h

sm.n n.f zb.w n k3.sn m h^{cc}.wt

“It is **for** him that have gone those who have departed in joy **for** their *k3*”.

⁴³ For some (rare) probable cases with inanimate, cf. for instance CT V 290 k; VI 2 g. Cf. also Posener, G. (1956), 156–157 (Golénischeff, W. (1913), 25 & pl. XV, ll. 57–58), although it is about inhabited places; James, T. G. H. (1962), 41.

⁴² Lazard, G. (1994), 117.

3.2.6. Possession.

In adverbial sentences, as well as in prepositional phrases, the preposition *n* can express possession, an extension from animate adessive, where both participants are at different levels (possessor and possessed).

Ex. 22 CT II 170 e

iw ḥw-ib-tzm n r^c

“The sceptre Authority-of-dog’s-heart (is) **for** Re”.

This kind of permanent possession, expressed by possessed + *n* + animate possessor, must be clearly distinguished from contingent possession that is expressed by the structure possessor + *hr* + inanimate possessed. In fact, the latter is an extension of the adessive meaning of the preposition *hr* ‘under’⁴⁴. We may find a paraphrase of it in the expression *smn* + object + *hr* + X (owner) = “put + object + under the ownership of X”.

Ex. 23 CT VI 340 g

in gb smn s(y) hr.t q.i pr.i im.s nḥnh.w

“It is Geb **the one who placed it** (= the abode) **under my (ownership)** to go in (and) out of it in joy”.

3.3. Characterization.

3.3.1. Attribution of function.

As Vernus has already remarked⁴⁵, the expression *rdi* + object (person) + *m/r* + rank is used to indicate the attribution of a function to a person, in different ways depending on the preposition. This expression displays another semantic extension of the prepositions *m* and *r* in which their basic opposition reappears: if the attributed function is at the same level as the old function (which constitutes the reference space), the preposition *m* is used; on the other hand, if the “displacement” from one function to the other implies a hierarchical change, the preposition *r* is then employed.

Ex. 24 CT VI 310 e–f

rdi.n N pn rs.w r 3tw.t.f iw mh.yt r mn^c.t.f

“That this N has put the southern wind **as** his *3tw.t*-nurse is when the northern wind is **as** his *mn^c.t*-nurse”.

For the second case, the Coffin Texts provide similar expressions of the dead’s promotion to a superior rank:

- The excellence: *zbi* + *r* + *im3h* ‘pass to excellence (state)’, always with *r*:

Ex. 25 CT VII 331 b

zb N tn r im3h mi r^c r^c nb

“May this N **pass to excellence** as Re (does) every day!”

This very rank (*im3h*) can also be received (*šzp*) by the dead:

Ex. 26 CT VI 126 h

iw šzp.n.i im3h.i hr pth-skr

“**I have received my excellence** from (lit. by) Ptah-Sokar”.

- The status of a goddess’ scribe: *tni* (in passive) + patient subject + *r* + function (*zš.s*) ‘to be promoted to the function of her (= goddess’) scribe’:

Ex. 27 CT VI 135 m–n

tn.(w).i pw r zš.s nb ḥms.t m-ḥnt wr.wt.sn m-ḥnt ʕ3.wt.sn ḥm.wt.sn isṯ

“It (means that) **I have been promoted to (the function of) her (= Hathor’s) scribe**, possessor of a seat at the head of their Great Ones (*wr.t*), their Highest Ones (*ʕ3.t*) and their women”.

- The sky: *šdi/rdi* (in passive) + patient subject + *r* + *p.t* (+ final clause) ‘to be pulled/put to the sky (to perform a function)’:

Ex. 28 CT V 159 d–f

šd.n.tw.i r p.t ḥms.t imty ntr.w ʕ3.w r wd^c-mdw dd.i m3^c.t

“**That I have been pulled up to the sky is for me to sit** among (lit. between) the great (*ʕ3*) gods to judge, to say the truth”.

It is interesting to recall that with the verb *iri*, an accomplishment, the opposition seems to be neutralized in favour of *m*:

Ex. 29 CT VI 290 a–b

[...] *iri.n.fsw m nb sh.t ḥtp.w r^c is hr sn.wt* [...]

“[...] (and) **he** (= the deceased) **has made himself as** Master of the Field of Offerings like Re, possessing the *sn.t*-loaves: [...]”.

⁴⁴ Malaise, M./Winand, J. (1999) § 241.

⁴⁵ Vernus, P. (1997), 73 (n. 205); Vernus, P. (1999), 104.

3.3.2. Identity and future/intention/destiny.

The relation of the uses of the above mentioned prepositions with two particular uses in the context of the adverbial sentence must be stressed: the preposition *m* expressing identity⁴⁶ and the preposition *r* indicating future, intention or destiny⁴⁷. These are semantic extensions of the inessive and adessive, respectively:

Ex. 30 CT II 113 f

iw ḥd-wr m nḥt.i [...]

“The Great-Bright (is) **as** my power [...]”.

Ex. 31 CT III 313 c

ink wsir iw.i r 3bd.w

“I am Osiris: I (am bound) **for** Abydos”.

As for the *m* of identity, the second participant is generally⁴⁸ at the same level of individuation⁴⁹ as the first participant: the space occupied by the first participant is the second participant, hence the idea of identity⁵⁰.

As for the preposition *r* expressing future, the first participant is not yet in the second participant’s space, as in the case of the hierarchical promotion, hence the future sense.

But still other meanings of these prepositions (*m* and *r*) can be attributed according to their basic meanings.

⁴⁶ Cf. for instance, Erman, A. (1928) § 445.11; Gardiner, A. H. (1957), mainly §§ 38, 44.2, 116 & 162.6; el Din, T. Sh. (1998); Malaise, M./Winand, J. (1999) § 514; Winand, J. (2006), 160–161.

⁴⁷ Cf. for instance Erman, A. (1928) § 446.12; Gardiner, A. H. (1957) §§ 116 & 122, who names it “*r* of futurity”; Malaise, M./Winand, J. (1999) § 514; Winand, J. (2006), 161. In egyptological literature, it is usually translated with the future of ‘be’ or with expressions of the kind of ‘be bound for/to’.

⁴⁸ In some cases, the second participant is an abstract entity with a possessive or genitive, what gives it animacy (for example, *s3* ‘protection’). For this fact, in the context of the nominal sentence and related patterns, cf. Doret, É. (1990), Doret, É. (1991) and Doret, É. (1992).

⁴⁹ Lazard, G. (1994), 202–203.

⁵⁰ Cf. the expression of the syncretism of Re and Osiris in Litany to the Sun, *wsir ḥtp.(w) m r^c & r^c pw ḥtp.(w) m wsir*, in Bonnet, H. (1952), 574–575; Otto, E. (1963), 269; Schenkel, W. (1974), 277; Spiegel, J. (1975), 170–174; Junge, F. (1978), 88 (& n. 3), 91 & 106; Hornung, E. (1992), 80 & pl. I.

3.3.3. Matter, partitive, company and instrument.

The preposition *m* expressing matter, partitive⁵¹ and company (with animates)⁵²/instrument (with inanimates) constitutes an extension of the inessive, in which both participants are in the same space: there is only one entity with a part more or less abstract of itself.

Ex. 32 CT II 369 a

iw inb n.t(y) ḥ3.s m bi3

“The wall which (is) around it (= Re’s Field of Rushes) (is) **of** bronze”.

Ex. 33 CT III 1 a

iw i3.t.i m i^cb.t r ḥw.wt-ntr

“My portion **of** meal (is) to the temples”.

Ex. 34 CT IV 67 o–p

iw t n N pn m rmt ḥtp.w-ntr n N pn m ḥrd.w

“There is bread for this N **with** the people (and) divine offerings for N **with** the children”.

Ex. 35 CT VI 52 f

mk wi m ir.t.i

“Here I am **with** my affair”.

The meaning of company/instrument must be distinguished from the meaning of companionship, where the adjunct, generally animate⁵³, displays an activity together with that of the subject, and that is expressed by the preposition-conjunction *ḥn^c*. The difference between companionship and instrument is clear, for instance, in

Ex. 36 CT II 61 d–62 b

‘q.n.i ḥn^c ḥk3.w m s3ḥ.i r ini.t n.i ḥf.t(y).i pf pr.y.i rf m hrw

“That I have entered **in the company of** ḥk3.w (and) **with** my knife, it is to bring me that enemy of mine (and) to come out then into the day”.

3.3.4. Opposition.

Nevertheless, the use of preposition *m* to express opposition is difficult to explain. This se-

⁵¹ Cf. Winand, J. (2006), 142 (who considers the partitive an extension of the provenance SA) & 146.

⁵² Cf. for instance James, T. G. H. (1962), 38. The preposition *m-i^cb* can also express company (CT VII 121 l). Perhaps the plurality of the entities has something to do with this use of *m*.

⁵³ Cf. Gardiner, A. H. (1957) § 171.1.

mantic extension could be complementary (without limit) of the preposition *r* for opposition (with limit) (cf. 3.2.4), but only a systematic study could elucidate this point.

Ex. 37 CT V 333 i

imi.sn d3.sn im.i

“May they not oppose (lit. **against**) me!”

3.3.5. Comparison.

The preposition *r* expressing comparison (an extension from the adessive) presents the relationship of quality between two participants placed at different levels according to that quality.

Ex. 38 CT VI 286 h

hṭp.fpw m bi3 r ḥnmṯ.t

“It (means that) his (= N’s) offering is (**more**) wonderful **than** ḥnmṯ.t’s”.

Its formal resemblance to the *r* of future and hierarchical promotion is obvious. The use of the same morpheme for the standard of comparison and for the future is known in general linguistics⁵⁴, showing the relevance of the notion of limit for these two concepts. It is absolutely crucial to distinguish the comparison of entities according to a quality (expressed by *r*) from the comparison according to an action (which is expressed by *mi*⁵⁵ and by *is*⁵⁶) and from the direct comparison of entities (expressed by *mi-qd*).

Ex. 39 CT II 341 a

mk ir.t.i mi sqr pf tp.(y) iri.(w).n stḥ r ir.t.i

“See, my eye (is) **like** that first injury that Seth made against my eye”.

Ex. 40 CT VI 103 f–h

wṇm.k d3b.k swr.k irp.k ḥr.k m s3b inpw is šṭ.(w) im mis.w ʿn.wt tp.(w)t dbʿ.w.k mi mis.w dbʿ.w dḥwtṯ

“May you eat your dates (and) drink your wine, your face (being) like a jackal’s, **like** Anubis’ masked there (and) the nail tips which (are) at your fingers (being) like Thoth’s finger tips!”

Ex. 41 CT VI 286 q–r

psš.in sw šms.w nb.t k3.w.in mspr mi-qd im.(y)w ḥ.t

“May you share it (= N’s purity), Followers of the Lady of your bull-snakes, the ribcage (being) **like** those who (are) in the fire!”

3.3.6. Model.

The preposition *r* (and also *ḥft*) can express the model, a very similar meaning to that of the above-mentioned comparison and that of relation (cf. 3.2.4).

Ex. 42 CT IV 310 a

*iw.i m šms.w n nb ḥ.wt r zš n ḥpr.w*⁵⁷

“I (am) in the retinue of the Master of offerings, **according to** the writing of the Transformed”.

Ex. 43 CT I 110 c–111 a

iri.k ṭw m nṯr m šms.w k3 imn.t sḥ.k ḥft s.t-ib.k

“May you make yourself as god in the entourage of the Bull of the Occident, your dignity (being) **according to** your desire!”

3.3.7. Matter under discussion.

Finally, the preposition *ḥr*, the most neutral of the simple spatial prepositions, is used to express, at least with certain verbs, the matter under discussion⁵⁸, which originates from its essive function. Sometimes, the preposition *tp* is used instead of *ḥr* with this meaning.

Ex. 44 CT VI 207 j–m

mk mdw ḥr rʿ mdw rʿ ḥr.i mdw.i ḥr.k

“See, the word (is) **about** Re, Re’s word (is) **about** me (and) my word (is) **about** you (= The-one-with-black-face)”.

* * *

By way of a résumé, and from a semantic point of view⁵⁹, we can say that:

- the abessive case expresses a limit “by the left” (cf. 1.1), which explains the extensions of provenance (cf. 1.2), clause of anterior time (cf. 2.2) and cause (cf. 3.1);

⁵⁴ Hagège, C. (1999), 776.

⁵⁵ For this construction, cf. Vernus, P. (1987) § XIX; Vernus, P. (1989).

⁵⁶ For this particle in the Coffin Texts, cf. Vernus, P. (1996).

⁵⁷ Main version.

⁵⁸ James, T. G. H. (1962), 107.

⁵⁹ Hagège, C. (1996), chap. 9.

- the essive and inessive cases, without any expression of limit (the p_1 is at or in the p_2) (cf. 1.1), motivates the extensions of course (cf. 1.2), pseudoverbal constructions hr/m + infinitive (cf. 2.1), clause of concomitant time (cf. 2.2) and characterization (cf. 3.3); and
- the adessive case, which expresses a limit “by the right” (cf. 1.1), produces the extensions of destination (cf. 1.2), pseudoverbal construction r + infinitive (cf. 2.1), clause of posterior time (cf. 2.2) and finality (cf. 3.2).

All functions developed by Egyptian spatial prepositions, no matter at which syntactic level they act, show remarkable semantic stability: m indicates interiority (absence of limit), r exteriority (presence of limit) and hr absence of the opposition interiority/exteriority. As a matter of fact, the latter preposition originally means ‘on’,

but, relating to the other two, it has been selected to express neutrality concerning the opposition interiority/exteriority. As for the preposition dr , it is only used as a conjunction, expressing limit. The prepositions n and hr are the equivalent, animate and animate divine respectively, of preposition r .

Table 4 displays the semantic functions of basic prepositions expressing space at different semantic domains: situation, motion (either position or displacement) and semantic extensions (temporal and abstract relations).

Therefore, according to their use, prepositions are defined by concepts more abstract than the spatial concepts. In fact, these abstract concepts seem to be the concepts which permit the basic (spatial) meanings to develop the semantic extensions. In other words, they are the *tertium*

Table 4

Preposition	Basic notion	Situation (Adverbial sentence)	Motion (Verbal sentence)	Semantic extensions			
				Temporal	Abstract relations		
					Cause	Finality	Characterization
<i>hr</i>	Generality (absence of mark)	general	general	<i>hr</i> + infinitive	Causal adjunct & clause	–	Matter under discussion (also <i>tp</i>)
<i>m</i>	Unity (absence of orientation and limit)	interior	interior	<i>m</i> + infinitive Concomitant clause	Causal adjunct & clause	–	Attribution of function Identity Matter Partitive Company/instrument Opposition
<i>r</i>	Facing (orientation mainly towards the “right” and separation from a limit)	exterior	exterior	<i>r</i> + infinitive Clause of posterior time	–	Implicative Final clause Opposition Relation Condition	Attribution of function Future/intention/destiny Comparison Model (also <i>hft</i>)
<i>n</i>	Facing + animacy	exterior	exterior	–	Causal adjunct & clause Agent (<i>in</i>) Cleft sentence (<i>in</i>)	Implicative Beneficiary Possession Final adjunct & clause	–
<i>hr</i>	Facing + divinity	exterior	exterior	–	Divine agent	–	–
<i>dr</i>	Limit (separation from a limit and absence of orientation)	–	–	Clauses of anterior & posterior time	Causal adjunct & clause	–	–

comparationis or the *family resemblance*⁶⁰ for each preposition. Definitions proposed for these prepositions are as follows: *hr* expresses generality, *m* unity, *r* facing, *n* animate facing, *hr* divine facing and *dr* limit.

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⁶⁰ Wittgenstein, L. (1953), §§ 47, 65–68 & 76–77.

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Summary

This paper briefly proposes a semantic approach to a cross-linguistically well known phenomenon: the use of the expression of space–situation or motion–to express temporal and abstract relations–cause, characterization and finality. The study is the result of a thoroughly analysis of data from the Coffin Texts.

Keywords

Coffin Texts – Space – Semantic extension – Preposition – Linguistics, Ancient Egyptian